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THE GARDEN OF ETHICS.*

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“LET us understand, once for all,” said Huxley in his Romanes Lecture, “that the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it.”¹ The critics seized upon this statement and others of like implication, and charged the veteran evolutionist with inconsistency. What, they asked, is the cosmic process but evolution under another name? Are we then to understand that the ethical process is independent of and antagonistic to evolution? If so, he whom we have regarded as the champion of naturalism, leader of the forces of science against the ancient strongholds of dogmatic authority,—even he proves false to his trust. That same Huxley who has taught us that man, with all his powers and all his ideals, is but the flower of a natural process of development, now sides with the clerics and the university dons. Hear how, in his declining years, he preaches from the pulpit of Oxford:

The cosmic process born with us and, to a large extent, necessary for our maintenance, is the outcome of millions of years of severe training, and it would be folly to imagine that a few centuries will suffice to subdue its masterfulness to purely ethical ends. Ethical nature may count upon having to reckon with a tenacious and powerful enemy as long as the world lasts.

* An address to the Moral Education League, February, 1911.

¹ “Collected Essays,” Vol. IX, p. 83.

Thus, as Mr. Leonard Huxley says in his admirable life of his father: "Some jumped to the conclusion that Huxley was offering a general recantation of evolution, others that he had discarded his former theories of ethics. On the one hand, he was branded as a deserter from free thought; on the other, hailed almost as a convert to orthodoxy."² Even those who realized that the cardinal feature of Huxley's thought was that the ethical process was differentiated within the cosmic process found in his doctrine a cause for stumbling. If the ethical process is part of, and therefore one with, the cosmic process, how can it possibly be said to combat it? How can the differentiated part be in antagonism to the whole of which it is thus admittedly a part? If the house of evolution be divided against itself, shall it not swiftly fall? In reply to this Huxley, writing to Professor Seth, says:

I really have been unable to understand what my critics have been dreaming of when they raise the objection that the ethical process, being part of the cosmic process, cannot be opposed to it. They might as well say that artifice does not oppose nature, because it is part of nature in the broadest sense.³

In another letter, written to Mr. Common, Huxley succinctly summarized his position:

These are two very different questions which people fail to discriminate. One is whether evolution accounts for morality, the other whether the principle of evolution in general can be adopted as an ethical principle. The first, of course, I advocate, and have constantly insisted upon. The second I deny, and reject all so-called evolutionary ethics based upon it.⁴

On the former of these two questions I have here and now but little to say,—and that little merely with a view to render the position clear. When Huxley said that evolution accounts for morality, he gave expression to his belief that the ethical process is one with and part of the cosmic process. From the standpoint of empirical science,—of which Huxley was the untiring advocate,—

² "Life and Letters," Vol. II, pp. 352, 353.

³ "Life and Letters," p. 358.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

evolution does not 'explain' either the one or the other. "It is very desirable to remember," he says, "that evolution is not an explanation of the cosmic process, but merely a generalized statement of the methods and results of that process."⁵ It may appear at first sight that there was some inconsistency in Huxley's thought or expression. It does certainly seem as if he says that evolution accounts for that of which it can afford no explanation. The apparent inconsistency arises however from the use of such words or phrases as 'explain' and 'account for' with two different connotations; first, when they are used in the universe of discourse of science; secondly, when they are employed in philosophical or ontological discussions. The man of science accounts for the fall of a stone to the earth in terms of the formula of universal gravitation; he explains the formation of hoar-frost as an example of crystalization; and it is in this sense that Huxley would account for the facts of morality as falling within the concept of evolution. If the philosopher protests that such a mode of accounting for the facts affords no true explanation, since it gives no answer to the question, why the facts and processes are what we find them to be,—he finds that Huxley is in full agreement with him. In that sense of the term, "it is very desirable to remember that evolution is not an explanation of the cosmic process, but merely a generalized statement of the methods and results of that process." In that sense of the term, Huxley frankly confessed that he had no explanation to offer, and therefore labeled himself agnostic.

Contenting myself for the present with this passing allusion to the first of the two very different questions which in Huxley's opinion people fail to discriminate, I turn to the second question,—whether the principle of evolution in general can be adopted as an ethical principle. His answer was an emphatic negative. He went

⁵ "Collected Essays," Vol. IX, p. 6.

so far as to say that he rejected all so-called evolutionary ethics based upon the premises of an affirmative answer. He said:

I hear much of the 'ethics of evolution.' I apprehend that, in the broadest sense of the word 'evolution,' there neither is, nor can be, any such thing. The notion that the doctrine of evolution can furnish a foundation for morals seems to me to be an illusion which has arisen from the unfortunate ambiguity of the term 'fittest' in the formula, 'survival of the fittest.' We commonly use 'fittest' in a good sense, with an understood connotation of 'best'; and 'best' we are apt to take in its ethical sense. But the 'fittest' which survives in the struggle for existence may be, and often is, the ethically worst.⁶

Followers and disciples of Herbert Spencer were naturally up in arms. Had not their leader and master founded his ethical doctrine on a very different conception,—a conception more fully in accord with the cardinal principle of continuity in progressive development? What could Huxley mean by this repudiation of the ethics of evolution? If the notion that the doctrine of evolution can furnish a foundation for morals be, in accordance with Huxley's assertion, false, where can we find,—where indeed can we even seek,—a foundation firmly imbedded in the natural order of events?

I cannot but think that Huxley's *dictum*, as it stands in the extract I have quoted, is open to such criticism. None the less, I believe that it is rather in the mode of expression than in his underlying thought that Huxley was apparently inconsistent,—was seemingly false to the principles which he had advocated for so many strenuous years. Had Huxley substituted for the word 'evolution' the phrase 'natural selection,' there would have been far less valid ground for adverse criticism. I for one should be prepared to agree that the doctrine of natural selection does not furnish a foundation for the adequate interpretation of the ethical process. That this was what Huxley had in mind seems to be shown by the reference to the 'survival of the fittest' in the concluding part of his

⁶ "Life and Letters," p. 303. Cf. "Collected Essays," Vol. IX, p. 80.

sentence. If we can accept this view, we reduce, in some degree at least, the apparent paradox of the antagonism of the two processes. A measure of paradox still remains. To its discussion Huxley devoted the *Prolegomena* to the ninth volume of his *Collected Essays*. Here he endeavored to remove "that which," as he says, "seems to have proved a stumbling block to many,—namely, the apparent paradox that ethical nature, while born of cosmic nature, is necessarily at enmity with its parent. Unless," he adds, "the arguments set forth in the *Prolegomena*, in the simplest language at my command, have some flaw which I am unable to discern, this seeming paradox is a truth, as great as it is plain, the recognition of which is fundamental for the ethical philosopher."⁷

Of the state of nature the very essence is impermanence. That which endures is the process of which the cosmos is the product. As the expression of a fixed order, every stage of which is the effect of causes operating according to definite rules, the conception of evolution excludes that of chance. Scientific knowledge tends, with constantly increasing emphasis, to establish the belief that not merely the world of plants, but that of animals; not merely living things, but the whole fabric of the earth; not merely our planet, but the whole solar system; not merely our star with its satellites, but the millions of similar bodies which are scattered through boundless space, bear witness to the rational order which, underlying the flow of energy, pervades the cosmos. With none of these, however, has Huxley anything to do in the *Prolegomena*, except with that phase of the cosmic process exhibited by the forms of life which tenant the earth. Therein we see three great groups of facts; the facts of variation; the facts of overproduction, more young being brought into existence than can possibly reach maturity in a world already fully stocked; the facts of the struggle for existence involving elimination of the ill-

⁷"*Collected Essays*," Vol. IX, Preface, p. viii.

adapted and consequent survival of the fittest. Looking out over the downs from the windows of his Eastbourne house, Huxley saw a state of nature which was the outcome of this phase of the cosmic process.

But turning his eyes towards the carefully cultivated plot of ground within his garden wall, Huxley saw not the product of natural selection through the elimination of the ill-adapted, but the outcome of deliberate choice and intelligent forethought. Trees, shrubs, and herbs, many of them appertaining to the state of nature in remote parts of the globe, abounded and flourished. Vegetables, fruits, and flowers were produced, of kinds which would never have existed except under conditions that obtain in the garden,—which would soon cease to exist if man relaxed his watchful care for their preservation. The state of art or artifice in the garden is only maintained on this condition,—that the state of nature shall be prevented from again encroaching upon and holding sway over the cultivated plot won from it by human toil guided by human forethought. For not only is the state of nature hostile to the state of art in the garden; but the principle of the horticultural process, by which the latter is created and maintained, is antithetic to that of the cosmic process. The garden and its products are the embodiment in concrete form of the ideals of man the gardener; he shapes them to his will so far as the materials open to his far-ranging choice permit; and only by holding at bay the forces of nature which tend to mar or destroy them can he hope to preserve the fruits or flowers which are the expression of his ideals of utility or beauty.

Such in outline is the parable of the garden with which the *Prolegomena* to Huxley's volume on "Evolution and Ethics" opens. I have been forced to mingle some of my own brass with the bright silver of the master's style. I have also borrowed from Huxley's thought the title of this address. The garden of ethics is the plot of cultivated ground in which, as members of this league, you

labor; and the point on which I desire to lay stress is that the garden of ethics is a place wherein ideals are nurtured until they blossom and, if it may be, bring forth fruit to perfection.

Before passing on, however, to interpret the parable of the garden in some of its ethical applications, I must draw attention to an important difference between the natural selection which obtains in the organic phase of the cosmic process and the conscious selection which in large measure determines human progress, in horticulture and in ethics. "The endless varieties of cultivated flowers, fruits, roots, tubers, and bulbs," said Huxley, "are not the products of selection by means of the struggle for existence, but of direct selection, in view of an ideal of utility or beauty."⁸ The distinction is here rather hinted than explicitly set forth. Let me try in a few words to render it somewhat clearer to our thought. Speaking of the logical and biological outcome of the struggle for existence, Professor Poulton⁹ has emphasized the fact that "the process is of course selection by and through elimination." Here elimination implies the absence of any truly selective choice, and the presence of a mechanical or quasi-mechanical means by which the ill-adapted to the conditions of life are weeded out. Elimination begins at the bottom of the scale of variants and works progressively upwards. The first to go are those which are hopelessly ill-adapted; then those which, though not so ill-adapted, are yet not sufficiently well adapted to compete with their betters; and so onward up the scale until only the few eminently fit variants survive to mate with other survivors and thus continue a well-adapted race. It is otherwise with conscious selection. It begins at the top of the scale of variants. There is real choice; a deliberate and purposeful picking out of those variants which most closely accord with an ideal framed

⁸ "Collected Essays," Vol. IX, p. 15.

⁹ "Essays on Evolution," p. 105.

in the mind of the selector. In the garden of ethics this is the process by which the highest results are achieved.

There is a sense, however, and a quite true and valid sense, in which it may be said that the selection of ideals involves the elimination, or at any rate the rejection, of other ideals. But the word elimination here carries a meaning different from that which natural elimination in the organic struggle for existence carries. For this elimination means conscious and purposeful rejection. We choose to eliminate because the rejected ideal does not satisfactorily meet the requirements of the case. We exercise positive choice at one end of the scale, negative choice at the other end. Still there are undoubtedly analogies between the two processes. Here is a plot of ground to be won from nature and to be converted into a garden. Before a sod of earth has been turned, the fortunate possessor surrenders himself to the pleasant task of planning and scheming. Perhaps he has long cherished the hope that some day he might have this opportunity of carrying out certain ideas which have gradually been taking shape in his mind. But from what a vast number of other ideas these are the selected few! In how many varied ways have these been grouped and regrouped! He could not count the number of garden plans which have been formed, entertained for a while, and then rejected,—or perhaps, rather, modified and refashioned. Within the specific type of horticultural scheme there have been diverse variations; through the fecundity of thought, many more variants have been mentally begotten than could possibly remain existent, now at last to be carried into execution; has there not been a struggle for existence among them as the outcome of which some survive just because they were the fittest to prevail? And is not all this equally true of the ethical process,—of the development of a plan of life-conduct in its social relationships? Surely our prevalent ideals—the prevalent ideals of each one of us individually—are those which

have won their way to dominance through much competition and many inward struggles.

If then, alike in the development of horticultural and of ethical ideals, and in the evolution of organic species, there is variation, there is overproduction, there is struggle for existence, there is survival; wherein lies the justification for regarding the ethical process as different in principle, and antagonistic in result, to the cosmic process which prevails outside the garden wall? Different in principle, I take it, because the surviving ideal gets its value and sanction in relation to a conscious end or purpose within which it is a contributory factor. Different in principle, in short, because, where there is intelligent choice, certain conditions, which we name mental, are present, whereas these conditions are absent in organic evolution as such, just as certain other conditions which are present in organic evolution, are absent in the inorganic world. And antagonistic in result, because as matter of fact and common observation the garden products can only hold their own under the protective influence of intelligent care. If vigilant supervision be not constantly exercised,—if seeds from the flourishing representatives of the surrounding state of nature be not excluded, or if the products of those which do find entrance be not speedily destroyed,—weeds will spring up and choke the more delicate flowers imported and planted with so much care; weeds all the ranker in growth from the richness of the soil which has been artificially prepared. Sooner or later our garden will revert to a state of nature, differing indeed from that outside the broken wall, since the effects of new conditions once introduced can never be entirely effaced.

I have suggested that the purchaser of the garden plot has already, before he enters into possession, framed horticultural ideals. But so far, it is a garden *in posse*, not yet a garden *in esse*. It is the garden he would like to make and to have for his own; but all that he has as yet secured is the opportunity of carrying his plans into

execution. This is a step towards the realization of his ideals. But he is unusually fortunate if he does not meet with many hampering conditions. The space at his command, which is all that circumstances permitted him to acquire, is a good deal less than that of his ideal garden. The soil is poor and refractory and he cannot afford to spend much money upon it. The contour of the ground does not well suit his purpose. The prevalent slopes give a northerly exposure. Climatic conditions leave much to be desired. He can only mould nature to his will within certain limits. If he be a practical man and not only a dreamer of garden day-dreams, he will carefully ascertain these limits and adapt the scheme which he proposes to put into execution to the actual circumstances presented in the concrete case. There is thus not only a selection of the contributory factors which shall be incorporated in the ideal construction of his thought, not only a selection of this ideal garden from among other such because it is the fittest to survive in the total environment of his mind and character; there is a further selection when it comes to the practical issue of putting his plans into execution,—a selection of the ideal garden which under the given circumstances can be embodied in concrete form on the plot of ground he has acquired. Here and now it is impossible to lay out and stock the garden of his fancy. He has to modify and refashion his ideal construction in accordance with conditions which he is incapable of altering,—the actual garden he can show to his neighbors and friends in the embodiment of the ideal that has survived those stern conditions which, in this and in all cases, nature imposes.

Let us now consider briefly another and somewhat different case. We have supposed that our horticultural friend is to be owner of his garden plot. He has, therefore, a perfectly free hand to do what he will with his own as best he may under the circumstances. But take the case of a corporate body that has acquired a considerable area of land which is to be converted into

a public garden. A committee of management has been selected and appointed, presumably (if the presumption be not extravagant) because they have some knowledge of such matters and some ideas concerning the manner in which a public garden should be planned and planted. Our horticultural friend is a member of the committee. He is filled with new hopes. Now with a larger area, with better soil, under conditions much more favorable, and backed by funds from a corporate purse, he sees before him a better opportunity of realizing some of his cherished ideals, one more rich in promise of fulfillment. But he is only one member of the committee. Other members have quite different notions as to what ought to be done. A preliminary meeting discloses the fact that there is nothing approaching to a consensus of opinion as to what form the garden should take and what the chief aim of the committee should be. Indeed the most noteworthy outcome of the preliminary discussion is the record, in the minutes, of a great number of suggestions very diverse in character. Then follows, in subsequent meetings, a struggle for supremacy among many varying ideals with the ultimate prevalence of the fittest. We must be careful to note, however, 'in this connection, the exact connotation of 'the fittest.' It is the fittest to prevail, or in brief that which does prevail, under the conditions of the committee's deliberations, including much persuasive advocacy, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, some stubborn refusal to yield to such advocacy. Not improbably the garden plan which is finally accepted, perhaps by a majority vote, is not that which any single member regards as ideally the best among the practicable schemes. It is, in greater or less measure, a compromise; and in saying that it is a compromise one means that it is that outcome of mutual concession which the majority of the committee consents to accept. And so the public garden is laid out and planted. It is the embodiment of the committee's ideal. It is the ideal which has survived in the struggle for existence of ideals in the minds of

individual men; it is the ideal which has survived as a practicable scheme under the conditions imposed by nature; it is the ideal which has survived in the give and take of social discussion; it is an ideal, the embodiment of which in the public garden can only be maintained by a staff of gardeners who, under skilled direction, keep wild nature at bay.

Such a garden, embodying ideals framed and surviving under somewhat analogous conditions, is the garden of ethics. All of us who have at heart the furtherance of moral education are members of such a committee. Each of us has an ideal of how the garden should be laid out and developed. For each of us some moral flowers or fruits appear more worthy of cultivation than others. We have all to realize that what we would do must inevitably be limited to what we can do under circumstances which are in some measure beyond our control. Any scheme of moral instruction which we propose must be in some degree a compromise which is accepted in order to secure joint and corporate action. But in our case the whole matter is complicated by the fact that, in the garden of ethics, the plants and shrubs have, or gradually acquire, their own ideals of what the garden should be and of their relations to each other. They are not merely more or less plastic material in the hands of the committee and the gardeners; they are, or may become, consenting parties to the development of the ethical scheme.

If we regard the flowering plants, the fruit trees, the 'vegetables,' and the ornamental shrubs, as embodiments of horticultural ideals, as products of artifice in contradistinction to products of nature, as the fittest to survive in relation to our conceptions of beauty and utility, though they would be swiftly eliminated in the environment of a state of nature,—if in brief we regard them as due to intelligent choice and preserved only by keeping nature at bay; we must none the less remember that from nature they are sprung and that thence come all the characters which the horticulturalist has selected with

so much skill and patience. So too in the garden of ethics. That garden may contain moral products which nowhere outside the garden wall acquire the forms and proportions which evoke our approbation, but it contains no products whose origins may not be traced to the common ground of human nature. Moral ideals are no doubt highly differentiated products of psychological process, but within that process they have their natural genesis, no matter what the methods and conditions of their selection and survival may have been. They are products of evolution even though they come into conflict with other products of the cosmic process.

I suppose that in following up the parable we may look upon developing men and women as the analogues of cultivated plants, and their moral ideals and activities as corresponding to the flowers and fruit the gardener seeks to bring to fuller perfection. What we wish to develop is moral quality as ingrained in the character of the race. But is it open to us here, in the garden of ethics, where human beings are the plants, to adopt the methods of the horticulturalist or the like methods of the cattle breeder? Can we deliberately select for survival those human plants which produce the most beautiful moral flowers or ethical fruit of the highest social value, and of set purpose fling on the dunghill the worser variants which fail to meet with our approbation? Can we steadily and persistently, generation after generation, breed from the better moral stock and exclude from our garden the inferior seedlings? Obviously, with our existing ethical ideals, what we can do on such lines as these is a negligible quantity. It is not practically open to us to improve the moral stock in this way. Our task is thus rendered much more difficult than that of the horticulturalist or the cattle breeder. But we must take it as we find it. Of course it is possible that the moral character, raised to a higher level by education and training in one generation, may be transmitted through heredity to the next generation. I doubt it; but into the vexed

question of the inheritance of acquired characters I cannot enter at length. Huxley himself said:

There can be no doubt that vast changes have taken place in English civilization since the reign of the Tudors. But I am not aware of a particle of evidence in favor of the conclusion that this evolutionary process has been accompanied by any modification of the physical, or the mental characters of the men who have been the subjects of it. I have not met with any grounds for suspecting that the average Englishmen of to-day are sensibly different from those that Shakspeare knew and drew. We look into his magic mirror of the Elizabethan age, and behold, nowise darkly, the presentment of ourselves.¹⁰

One may perhaps go a step further and say that the average English baby over whom the mother croons to-day is morally and intellectually no better endowed in hereditary character than the infant who lay in his mother's lap in early Plantagenet times.

In each case the child may be regarded as a bundle of inherited potentialities. But we must remember that potentialities can only be realized as actualities under appropriate conditions. The aim of moral training and education is to afford the best opportunities for the development of the child-plants for whom we hold ourselves socially responsible,—to provide an environment under whose stimulating influence every worthy potentiality shall blossom into the realized flowers of the ethical life, while the immoral and unsocial tendencies, which all of us inherit, shall remain in abeyance. As Buckle long ago urged, social evolution is a progressive development of opportunity. Opportunity is part of the atmosphere of social life. Moral respiration depends on two factors: the ethical lung-power which is, in a sense, inherited: and the air which is the breath of moral life. Both factors have to be brought into relation. Even if the conditions for the improvement of the hereditary lung-power be beyond our control, we may none the less afford the conditions for higher ethical vitality by controlling the moral atmosphere. To contribute to this higher ethical vitality

¹⁰ "Collected Essays," Vol. IX, pp. 37, 38.

(for which there surely should be greater opportunity to-day than there was in the times of Tudor or Plantagenet), is the central aim of the Moral Education League. That is part of its work in the garden of ethics. But do we always bear in mind how important, nay essential, it is that we should clearly understand the nature of the organism for whom we seek to enrich the environing atmosphere?

I spoke of the child as a bundle of inherited potentialities. Let us endeavor to give to this rather vague phrase a little fuller and somewhat less indefinite expression. In the first place, the child inherits tendencies to respond or behave in certain given ways under certain given circumstances, and' thus to gain experience, first, of these circumstances as presented in some specific situation, secondly, of its own behavior in this situation, and, thirdly, of sundry emotional accompaniments. In the second place, the child inherits a capacity of profiting by experience and of modifying his behavior in accordance with what he has learnt and is daily learning concerning the nature and meaning of the world around him and the actions of his neighbors. Now both of these depend upon innate tendencies; but the behavior which logically falls under the former category is relatively independent of any previous experience, while that which logically falls under the latter category is partly dependent on previous experience. On the one hand, there is the unlearnt behavior which comes by nature; on the other hand, there is the acquired modification of behavior which comes through training and education. There are unquestionably innate tendencies to do certain things in special ways in given situations and thus to gain particular kinds of experience with their pleasurable or unpleasant accompaniments in feeling; but there are also unquestionably innate tendencies which guide and partly determine the direction taken during the process of learning. The outcome of nurture is itself in large measure dependent on nature. None the less the distinction be-

tween nature and nurture as coöperating factors in the mental and active life of the child is valid and helpful.

A further distinction may profitably be drawn. It is one that is familiar to psychologists, but one which the ethical teacher too often fails to realize, although it is for him of much importance. Not only does the child inherit the capacity of profiting by experience in a naïve and simple animal fashion, he also inherits the ability to reflect upon both the processes and the products of his experience, to frame ideal constructions in terms of which they may be interpreted, to shape his behavior and guide his actions not only in accordance with the direct experience of the moment, tinged with pleasure or pain, but in relation to the wider significance of his conduct, enriched with a higher order of satisfaction or of regret. It is here, in this more highly developed region of mental life and activity, where behavior rises to rational conduct, where naïve experience is supplemented by knowledge, where emotion is in close alliance with sentiment,—it is here that ethical ideals come into being, it is here that moral education becomes possible.

Now, paradoxical as it may sound, it is just because here only does moral education become possible that the ethical teacher is apt to be inadequately prepared for his task, at any rate in so far as he confines his attention to the products and processes of this stage of mental development. He starts on his study of child-nature (and such measure of psychology as this may involve) at too high a level,—at the level of the rational and moral being. He takes, we may assume, abundant pains to grasp the nature of ethical problems, and the methods of their interpretation, more especially in their intellectual aspect; and, with the help, let us say, of Messrs. Welton and Blandford's "Moral Training Through School Discipline," he makes an honest and not altogether unsuccessful attempt to apply the results of his study in the training of the young. But of the underlying foundations of the organic and mental life at lower levels of development he is,—

I will not say wholly ignorant, but I think I may say, almost entirely dependent on popular tradition, vaguely formulated and uncritically accepted. This is not by any means altogether his fault. The books to which he turns for guidance, themselves start at the moral and intellectual level and have little to say concerning sub-moral development. Even the psychologists too often fail to give him the kind of treatment which is suited to his special needs. For, in the terms of our parable, those who would do effective work in the garden of ethics should learn not to confine their attention only to the moral blossom and fruit which are the final outcome of a long and continuous process, but should have a sound and sufficient knowledge of the organic structure and mode of development of the whole plant. Their chief difficulty is to know where to obtain reliable information afforded in terms not too technical, and presented in such a form as may stimulate interest and lead them to feel that they are getting real help in view of their own work.

To this end I would direct their attention to Mr. W. McDougall's "Introduction to Social Psychology." I have the misfortune to differ from Mr. McDougall in his doctrine of instinct,—but this is a subsidiary matter. His book is, in my opinion, one of quite exceptional interest and value. Instead of taking at the outset the high-level route and regarding our noble selves as through and through rational, save for occasional lapses, he contends:

Mankind is only a little bit reasonable and to a great extent very unintelligently moved in quite unreasonable ways. . . . The truth is that men are moved by a variety of impulses whose nature has been determined through long ages of the evolutionary process without reference to the life of men in civilized societies; and the psychological problem we have to solve is, How can we account for the fact that men so moved ever come to act as they ought, or morally and reasonably?¹¹

The first thing we have to do is to dig down to the roots of human behavior that we may understand the nature of the primary innate tendencies. There are es-

¹¹ "Social Psychology," pp. 10, 11.

entially tendencies to behave in certain ways in certain circumstances and, as Mr. McDougall urges, to experience at the same time certain emotional accompaniments. Here we have the genesis of experience in its three-fold aspect—cognition, affective tone, and activity. Here we have the primal source of all organic and mental energy. From these innate tendencies,—using this phrase in the broadest sense and quite irrespective of the period of life at which they are manifested,—the whole of our mental life and conduct is elaborated by a process of continuous differentiation. I do not propose to follow Mr. McDougall in his suggestive treatment and in his difficult task of analysis, in the course of which he throws much light on the sub-moral and sub-rational foundations of moral conduct. No doubt, some will say that they did not need to be told that the child has innate tendencies,—tendencies, for example, both to imitation and its opposite, contra-imitation; tendencies to be domineering and self-assertive in one life situation, and subservient and submissive in another, to exhibit the germs of tender emotion, on the one hand, and of anger or resentment, on the other. But I conceive that they do need to learn how these and other traits of human nature have their origin, how they are related within an evolutionary and developmental scheme, how they form a woven web of relatively unreasoned behavior, and how they are progressively touched to the finer moral issues.

If once we realize how large a proportion of human behavior, and *a fortiori* of child behavior, is of the relatively unreasoned order, we shall appreciate the importance of moral training as the natural and essential preparation for moral education. By moral training,—in which phrase I use the adjective in a proleptic sense,—I mean the establishment of right social habits and thus the development of what Messrs. Welton and Blandford term general habitudes,—as part and parcel of the custom and tradition of civilized human folk. A very large proportion of our own behavior, and a still larger pro-

portion of that of children, is carried out just because, in our customary surroundings, non-rational, or what is technically termed perceptual experience has taught us that the results are satisfactory and pleasant. We come to act in this way or that simply because we feel like doing so, just as we eat our breakfast because, with eggs and bacon in front of us and a knife and fork at hand, we feel like satisfying a healthy appetite. Of course, if some one asks why we eat, we may indicate the significance of our act in relation to nutritive processes; or may even rise to a more exalted rational level and explain that physiology has taught us to realize that a due balance must be maintained between katabolism and anabolism, and that only by the absorption of nutriment in due amount, can the waste of the tissues be repaired. Now the rational justification and the physiological sanctions of breakfasting, important as no doubt they are, may I think be regarded as supplementary to the much less reasonable, but not less serviceable, mental attitude when one eats for no better reason than that one has an inclination to do so. I am well aware that eating is a natural process founded on a very obvious innate tendency, whereas social behavior, as the outcome of moral training, involves much modification and elaboration of diverse natural propensities. But take that pretty complex product of school life which we speak of as 'playing the game.' Does not the boy learn to play the game, and to feel like playing the game, in large measure,—I do not say entirely, but in large measure,—under the moulding influence of the custom and tradition embodied in his school environment? And if he be asked why he plays the game, is not any explanation he can give rather a supplementary afterthought, than the really guiding and driving impulse under the sway of which he does actually play the game? Now playing the game is surely one of the choicest flowers in the garden of ethics. I am not sure that, broadly considered, playing the game may not be regarded as the very quintessence of morality. And

yet I venture to suggest that if he has not in the first instance been drilled through custom and tradition; if he has not been wisely licked into shape so as to feel like behaving with some show of decent respectability; if he has to await the development of strictly ethical motives before he even begins to play the game, his chances of eventually playing truly and well on the ethical plane of conduct are most seriously reduced.

I have taken playing the game as an example of social behavior. I have suggested the paramount importance of moral training which implies the enforcement of our ideals of conduct on agents who are allowed but little freedom of choice. But it is not my intention to imply that the boy as he passes up through the school does not rise to the ethical plane, the plane of moral liberty. On the contrary, it is just here that perhaps the most real and vital part of his moral education has its origin,—here in the every-day life of the school and of course also there in the every-day life of the home. For purposes of illustration I select the school; but the emphasis is on the fact that *in normal boy life* the most real and vital part of his moral education has its origin. By moral education, as contrasted with moral training, I mean the development of insight into and knowledge of the significance of conduct in relation to an ethical scheme; the linking of scattered impulses so as to form motives of real driving power; the organization of endeavor in accordance with more or less clearly grasped purpose; the emergence of that unified whole which may be properly called character; with liberty to choose for better or worse. Granted that at first and for some time, the boy plays the game just because the game is going on around him and he is a member of the society in which and by which it is being played, just because he so readily yields to suggestion, is imitative to the core, is an emotional chameleon taking his hue in relation to his social environment, is profoundly influenced by the prestige of older boys, and this in a relatively reflex and unreflective fashion, with

relatively little free choice,—granted all this; we have here only one phase of development. There comes a time, sooner or later, when the boy frames ideals,—an ideal of the game as it ought to be played, an ideal of the part he himself has to play in it, an ideal of the parts others have to play with effective coördination and subordination; and he proceeds, within the limits of his freedom, to put these ideals into practice. The form the ideals take is largely determined by the way in which the game is, as a matter of fact, being played, probably under the influence of some masterful boys. He doesn't talk much about it; the word 'ideal' is not a familiar one in his practical work-a-day vocabulary; but he has pretty clear notions of the difference between 'good form' and 'bad form,' and he takes a quite definite part in the moral training of his juniors. He is not very lavish of praise, for he expects and demands conformity to a high standard of play; but such praise as he does occasionally vouchsafe, backed by his vast prestige, is worth much and quickens endeavor. Of blame, supplemented on occasion by a cuff on the head, he has a fairly rich and varied store. Since he is in a measure responsible for the good form of the school, he takes care to make it exceedingly unpleasant for those who don't or won't play up. The rules of the game—the whole game of school life—are perhaps not quite those which admit of universal application in the drawing-room or the counting-house,—for school morality has a complexion of its own. But the ethical system out of which they arise, has living force and is in close touch with the realities of a definite phase of social development.

I have assumed that the tone of the school is reasonably good, and that the ideals on the whole set in the right direction. That this assumption is unduly optimistic is unfortunately in some cases only too true. The school-master is often well aware of the fact that the game is not being played well and that the standard of good form is lamentably deficient. Waves of moral obliquity of more

or less pronounced type sometimes pass over a school. Occasionally it seems almost impossible to raise a low standard of behavior and conduct. The weeds of the garden of ethics grow so rankly that the flowers have little chance of development. These are stern facts to be faced. I take it that in some cases the school ought to be closed; in others that weak and ineffective masters, lacking in wise prestige and in suggestive influence, should be replaced by others better fitted to work in the garden of ethics. It is questionable whether the most admirable and well-conceived moral instruction is in such cases of much avail. If the game of what is to the boy real and practical life,—life as it is lived and not as it is talked about,—is being badly played, the only chance of improvement is for a wise, strong, sympathetic man to gain the ear and the admiration of the elder boys and gradually to induce them to play a better game. But there must be some coöperative playing the game with them. It is no use merely to lecture them on playing the game. In many cases, strong, manly, clean-cut junior masters, not too far removed from the level of the senior boys, are of great service in restoring good tone to a school. But theirs are not the methods commonly understood to be those of so-called moral instruction.

The difficulty with regard to moral instruction, as preparatory to playing the more complex game on the wider stage of adult life, is that in so far as the conduct dealt with, and the ideals illustrated, are beyond the practical experience of the hearers, the instruction is apt merely to afford additional material through which the intellectual faculties may be exercised. It is, however, generally recognized that an extensive and accurate knowledge about moral situations and ethical ideals may be,—nay, is in itself,—of little avail for the development of right conduct. Where behavior is concerned, the only way to learn is by behaving; and one cannot even begin to behave in an intelligent manner until one feels like acting in that manner. There must be present either the rel-

actively simple and isolated impulses determined by the pleasures or pains in direct connection with the concrete situation and the immediate circumstances, or the more complex and highly organized motives arising within a rational system of which the self, as acting, is the center. In the latter case, the conduct is directed to an end which is not only significant for thought, but, what is far more important, an object of desire. Mere instruction of itself can neither teach us how to act nor supply the motive for action. The ablest course of lectures on billiard-playing is of no avail without concurrent practice; and the wisest instruction in the conduct of life can only be regarded as supplementary to constant practice in this yet more difficult game. There is, however, this obvious distinction. We may elect to play or not to play billiards, and if we don't want to play, we may safely cut the lectures. But we must all, young and old alike, take part in the game of social life. Yes, this is true enough; we have to play the game of life; still the really important question, I take it, is whether we want to play it well. That is fundamental. Unless there is a real desire to play the game at its highest possible level of attainment, the best moral instruction in the world will not lead to much, if any, improvement in the art of conduct.

Fortunately the young are born play actors. They are keenly susceptible to any vivid and dramatic presentation. There are three forms of mental interaction of fundamental importance for all social life: Suggestion, sympathy, and imitation.¹² These are closely and in-

¹² With regard to the relation of suggestion, sympathy, and imitation, Mr. McDougall says (p. 91): "These processes of mental interaction, of impression and reception, may involve chiefly the cognitive aspect of mental process, or its affective or its conative aspect. In the first case, when some presentation, idea, or belief of the agent directly induces a similar presentation, idea, or belief in the patient, the process is called one of suggestion; when an affective or emotional excitement of the agent induces similar affective excitement in the patient, the process is one of sympathy or sympathetic induction of emotion or feeling; when the most prominent result of the process of interaction is the assimilation of the bodily movements of the patient to those of the agent, we speak of imitation."

timately related and have their roots deep down in the sub-moral and sub-rational foundations of the higher mental life. In their earlier manifestations they are non-rational. Indeed, Mr. McDougall¹³ defines suggestion as a process of communication, resulting in the acceptance with conviction of that which is presented *in the absence of logically adequate grounds for its acceptance*. I take it that moral instruction must be in large measure suggestive in this sense. Now the dramatic situations presented in the course of moral instruction must of necessity often go beyond the actual experience of boys and girls. The game of life is portrayed on a larger scale and under more complex conditions than those of child life. But though the child has not yet had occasion to play the game of life on this scale, he has the inborn tendency *to play at playing the game*. Professor Groos has taught us that the evolutionary value of animal play lies in the fact that it affords ample opportunity for practising those modes of behavior on which success or failure in after life will depend. Should not the moral instruction lesson have an analogous value for the development of the child? Imaginative as he is, profoundly susceptible to the prestige of characters larger than his own, at a stage when the rapid and active growth of self-consciousness, in alliance with his innate actor-tendency, leads him to identify himself with the characters in the life drama presented, to share, and more than share, their elation in success, and their mortification in failure,—he plays, within the theater of his imagination, at playing the game and thus gains real and valid and ultimately serviceable experience. And the contra-phases of suggestion, sympathy, and imitation bear their part. As he identifies himself with the admired hero, clothed with the radiant glory of prestige, so does he turn in aversion, disdain, and disgust from the mean and underhand villain of the play, whose sardonic smile and gleaming white

¹³ "Social Psychology," p. 97.

teeth are in themselves sufficient to induce him to purse his lips tightly and forego the use of a toothbrush.

But such suggestion and contra-suggestion, though they lead to the adoption of certain mental attitudes, strongly tinged with emotion and sentiment, do so at first, as Mr. McDougall says, in the absence of any logically adequate grounds for their adoption; or at any rate, in large measure, independently of any rational or strictly moral justification. How far, in what manner, and at what stage of moral instruction, are we to deal with the ethical problem of the sanctions? These are difficult questions. Depend upon it, sooner or later,—I am inclined to think sooner than some of us are prepared to admit,—in some form or other, the question will arise: “Why *should* I play the game? Why should I not sneak an advantage when there is no risk of being found out?” What answer are we to give? The religious answer is somewhat out of vogue in these latter days. Are we prepared with another,—one that is within the comprehension of the child,—one which has the motive power which the older conceptions, in my opinion, undoubtedly possess for many, probably the majority of boys and girls? I shall probably be told by some extremists that the child is unable to grasp the idea of a God who approves the right and disapproves the wrong, who loves to see the game well and honestly played and hates all sneaking and under-hand ways. But, merely as a matter of social and comparative psychology, I cannot accept this view. At the child’s stage of mental development, the only kind of interpretation and explanation which carries conviction is that which is given in terms of human or quasi-human agency; the only sanction he can understand is that of human or quasi-human approval. What is completely beyond his reach is the scientific conception of universal law and ubiquitous causation. Many of his seniors find it exceedingly difficult to grasp the point of view of the man of science, who accepts determinism as a given fact and professes agnosticism when the question is asked how

this given fact can be explained. I am not discussing the truth or validity of the religious thesis. I only express my conviction that conceptions of the order of those which are current among Christian folk, are not beyond the grasp of boys and girls, and that they are strongly influential on conduct. And I do, speaking merely as psychologist, ask the question, whether any substitute for this conception has yet been suggested,—any other conception which has, for those at this stage of development, a like functional value.

Mr. McDougall, in the book I have already more than once quoted, has an interesting chapter on *The Instinctive Bases of Religion*.¹⁴ He is of opinion that, in the more primitive human communities,

the conceptions of supernatural powers, the products of man's creative imagination working through, and under the driving power of, the instincts of fear, curiosity, and subjection became the great generators and supporters of custom. . . . The two things, religion and morality, were not at first separate and later fused together; but they were always intimately related, and have reciprocally acted and reacted upon one another throughout the course of their evolution. . . . No society has been able to survive in any severe and prolonged conflict of societies, without some effective system of such sanctions . . . while all societies that have made any considerable progress in civilization have been able to do so only in virtue of the stability they derived from their system of supernatural sanctions. . . . At the present time, the spirit of inquiry has broken all its bonds and soared gloriously, until now the conception of natural causation predominates in every field. . . . The change of belief [thus brought about], the withdrawal of supernatural power from immediate intervention in the life of mankind, inevitably and greatly diminishes the social efficacy of the supernatural sanctions. Whether our societies will prove capable of long surviving this process is the most momentous of the problems confronting western civilization.

Mr. McDougall treats the matter, as I have been treating it, solely from the point of view of social psychology and social evolution. His conclusions are at least worthy of careful consideration. In a more recent work, "Rationalisme et Tradition," M. Jean Delvolvé discusses, with admirable lucidity, the efficacy of non-religious moral in-

¹⁴ "Social Psychology," pp. 302-321.

struction as contrasted with that founded on traditional beliefs. Weighed in the balance he finds it, as developed in France, lacking in motive power, lacking in psychological efficacy, lacking in unity and centralization,—too theoretical, too analytic, too intellectualistic.¹⁵ But though M. Delvolvé is persuaded that the traditional doctrines satisfy psychological conditions, there is one essential condition which in his judgment they do not satisfy,—a conviction of their abiding truth and reality. Scientific progress has not only destroyed belief in this or that theological dogma, it has produced a state of mind for which the basal conception of these traditional doctrines possesses only hypothetical and symbolic validity. This fact irremediably diminishes their practical efficacy.¹⁶ The basal conception must, therefore, be remodeled so as to furnish the center of a scheme of organization which shall replace that of the older tradition. As the outcome of this naturalistic metamorphosis we have (1) a conviction of the unity of nature, (2) the identification of individual aims with the universal end and purpose, and (3) faith in ultimate realization. Such a transformation appears to M. Delvolvé not only to accord with the normal conditions of all experience, but to furnish a practical equivalent of Christian faith.¹⁷

One is here reminded of Huxley's transformation of the doctrine of Providence. He says:

If the doctrine of a Providence is to be taken as the expression, in a way 'to be understood of the people,' of the total exclusion of chance from a place even in the most insignificant corner of Nature, if it means the strong conviction that the cosmic process is rational, and the faith that, throughout all duration, unbroken order has reigned in the universe, I not only accept it, but I am disposed to think it the most important of all truths. . . . If this doctrine be held to imply the existence of an underlying Cause, possessed of intelligence and foresight, similar to our own in kind, however superior in degree . . . scientific thought, so far as I know anything about it, has nothing to say against this hypothesis, . . . but the evidence accessible to us is, to my mind, wholly insufficient to warrant either a positive or a negative conclusion.¹⁸

¹⁵ "Rationalisme et Tradition," p. 40.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 118, 119.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 136, 137.

¹⁸ "Life and Letters," p. 302.

Such were Huxley's views with regard to a naturalized conception of the universal 'providence' with which M. Delvolvé's naturalized conception of 'the divine' appears pretty closely to accord. But Huxley further says:

So far as mankind has acquired the conviction that the observance of certain rules of conduct is essential to the maintenance of social existence, it may be proper to say that 'Providence,' operating through men, has generated morality. Within the limits of a fraction of a fraction of the living world, therefore, there is a 'moral' providence. . . . But outside the very rudimentary germ of a garden of Eden, thus watered, I am unable to discover any 'moral' purpose, or anything but a stream of purpose toward the consummation of the cosmic process, chiefly by means of the struggle for existence, which is no more righteous or unrighteous than the operation of any other mechanism.

Now granted that Huxley's remodeled conception of moral providence commends itself to a committee charged with the duty of supervising the garden of ethics; I conceive that some of them would feel that they were confronted by a grave practical difficulty. Some of them, I conceive, must doubt whether this conception can be 'understood of the people,' or 'understood of children'; whether, so far as understood, it affords an adequate motive for playing the game; whether it provides, for the majority of mankind, an effective substitute for the traditional sanctions of morality. In dealing with children, and a great number of adults, these members of the committee may feel that they are on the horns of a dilemma; the sanctions which are efficacious are not true; and the sanctions which are true are not efficacious.

I am well aware that many people will say that this practical dilemma is wholly fictitious. Let us assume that this is the case. Let us endeavor to remodel, if remodel we must, on the best possible lines. It was Huxley's deliberate opinion that the cosmic order, though it may be through and through rational, is nowise moral,—it is frankly unmoral. He himself spoke of his *Romanes Lecture* as "a very orthodox discourse on the text 'Satan, the Prince of this World.'"¹⁹ It is true that this po-

¹⁹ "Life and Letters," p. 303.

tentate is commonly regarded as blackly immoral; but after all there is perhaps something to be said for the view that he typifies the underlying principle of the merely unmoral cosmic order, and that only when he steals into the garden of ethics and lurks in the deeper shadows, does he seem so sombre of hue. In any case, according to Huxley, rational as it is, the cosmic order has to be combated. Only within the garden of ethics are the rational and the moral combined in one higher synthesis. Here and here only, not in the world at large beyond its walls, is to be sought and found a tendency which sets towards righteousness.

A final application of our parable is thus suggested. M. Delvolvé, as I understand him, contends that, at the foundation of lay instruction, there should be a conception and sentiment of the divine; but for him the divine is synonymous with the cosmic order. If however there is any truth in the conception of the garden of ethics which, as a pupil and disciple of Huxley's, I have tried to set forth, the divine, in M. Delvolvé's sense of this word only attains to ethical self-consciousness within the moral order. For agnostic ethics, therefore, under a naturalistic transformation, stress should be laid on the distinctively human relationships which obtain in the garden of ethics. Under such a transformation the basal conception would be: (1) A conviction of the dignity of man as a moral being; (2) the identification of individual aims with the moral (and not the cosmic) end and purpose; and (3) faith in realization,—a realization which, in so far as it is a fulfillment of the moral order, is also a triumph over the merely cosmic order as represented in man's animal nature. There is, I conceive, nothing here to which Christian ethics could reasonably take exception, though the Christian moralists would, no doubt, regard the formula as lamentably inadequate and incomplete, since it lacks the only valid basis and the only effective sanction of the categorical imperative. From the radically empirical point of view, the fact that moral ideals

do take form in the human mind as the outcome of evolutionary process is just a fact of which no ultimate explanation can be given. From this point of view, it must suffice to recognize the existence of the ethical process as a differentiated product which crystalizes within the evolutionary magna, to trace, so far as we can, the conditions of its genesis, and to take part in its further development. And if some of us, from a different point of view, feel impelled to postulate a Cause in terms of which both the evolutionary process and the moral order may in some measure be explained, we may at least take comfort in Huxley's assurance that scientific thought has nothing to say against this hypothesis.

I am well aware that there are many who will reject Huxley's thesis on the ground of its implied dualism. The tendencies of modern science and of modern philosophy set towards monism. As Professor Riehl has said,²⁰ "The spirit which feels itself one with the ground of all being is the poet of monism." But, surely, in one sense of the term, Huxley was a consistent monist. He was a monist in his abiding conviction of the abiding rationality of one cosmic process. Of this monistic conception he retained a firm hold, staunch and true to the end. Within this cosmic order as a whole, he believed the morality of man to be a differentiated product. But there is another monistic interpretation to which Huxley felt constrained to assume an attitude of antagonism,—that according to which the moral order, as such, is coextensive with the universe; that to which Dr. Riehl applies the phrase Platonism in Philosophy in the following sentences:

The improper application of an ethical or an æsthetic idea to the explanation of natural processes, when such an idea can only serve for the judgment and direction of human actions, is the source and the meaning of all Platonism in philosophy, by which I mean the effort to reach an ethical view of life, and an explanation of things, on the basis of one and the same principle. Plato transformed the Good, *i. e.*, the truly and enduringly useful, as Socrates defined it, into a transcendent being, and

²⁰ "Science and Metaphysics," p. 96.

made it the cause not only of knowledge, but of the very existence of nature itself. This conception, which has its origin in human society, loses every definite meaning when separated from its relation to society. The Good is not a ground of explanation, it is only a standard of judgment, and this not for external nature, but simply and only for the character and actions of men. The introduction of practical concepts, especially the concept of purpose, into external nature, makes the knowledge of this difficult if not impossible. Nature, or as metaphysicians say, the ground of nature, cannot be thought as equipped with moral qualities, except when uncritical anthropomorphism is given loose rein (pp. 19, 20).

This passage I think pretty exactly defines Huxley's position. Whether it expresses the last word of philosophy on this difficult problem is another question.

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ENERGISM IN THE ORIENT.*

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THE ethical conceptions of oriental peoples are as manifold as their conditions of life; and yet, in the common thought of the western world, the ethical temper of the East is quite different from that of our civilization. When ethical standards are discussed between different nations, it is difficult to avoid misunderstanding because each nation or race, having its own social conventions, which to it have become second nature, sees in the conventions of other peoples compromises with truth, if not a complete departure therefrom. Thus when the East and the West mutually compare their moral beliefs and modes of action, there is apt to be present a lack of sympathetic insight. Yet the ethical thought of India, traced to its simple Aryan sources, inculcates the same cardinal virtues which are contained also in our western codes. Purity, benevolence, and truthfulness are as important there as in our morality. Quite contrary to the common belief in the West, the appreciation of veracity is just as constantly and urgently held up as a fundamental virtue

* From a forthcoming book on "Intellectual Currents in the Far East."